No War But The Class War

First Belfast Class Struggle Anarchist Assembly

Meanwhile in Ballymena: Our Scary Big Alan

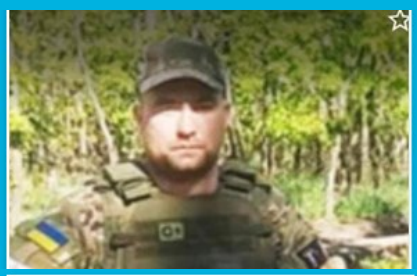
BLACK STAR

NO WAR

BUT THE CLASS WAR

Meanwhile in Ballymena

It's a strange aul world, with the IRPs supporting Putin's Loyalists in his two newly portioned republics and a local Loyalist signing up to help fight for the Ukraine against Russian imperialism…



I wanted to just confirm for *Black Star*, that local UDA hardman turned Ukrainian freedom fighter, Alan 'flamethrower to the balls' McCroary is not from Harryville.

This was something he really wanted to clear up recently in the local press who were covering his heroics against Putin. 'I'm actually from the Doury Road', said McCroary.

No War But The Class War: Sack P&O!

By now all of our readers will be aware of the move, which some have labelled as Dickensian labour relations, made by P&O Ferries boss, Andy Goode, against 800 P&O workers as they came in to dock on Thursday 17th March.

Workers were sacked with immediate effect with private security guards mobilised to physically remove them from the ships at various ports. Fair play though to the Larne seafarers who pulled up the gangway to stop the hired thugs from getting on board. As the redundancy 'offers' go out we have heard rumours that a few have been offered re-employment on new contracts with a 'no union' clause. The majority have been given a week or two to accept along with a suicide prevention number!

Of course, the usual chorus of outrage among politicians is doing the rounds when they had fuck all to say about British Gas doing the same shite last April with 500 boiler and heating installation workers forced to sign new contracts on worse pay, terms and conditions. We collectively need to send a message to P&O that enough is enough! They have advised passengers who had expected to travel from Larne to make other arrangements. Lets do that and fire P&O until these workers get their jobs back and their makey-up agency, 'International Ferry Management of Malta' fucks the fuck off.

Ukraine and everywhere:

No War But The Class War!

No war but the class war is a sentiment that is proving surprisingly unpopular in anarchist circles these days. Perhaps here at *Black Star* we are a wee bit old fashioned when it comes to seeing the laying down of working class lives in wars not started in their interests as nothing short of tragic. Tragic and barbaric.

Can working class people defend themselves from Russian imperialist aggression by joining (as independent military units or otherwise) the army of the Ukrainian state? First let us be very clear. Putin has invaded to further the imperialist interests of the Russian state. He is not some anti-Nazi liberator. Far from it. But that cannot blind us to the imperialist ambitions of NATO in the region and in Ukraine in particular. NATO is conducting a proxy war. Ukrainians who identify with their state, with their 'nation' are fighting foreign invaders. In reality workers are fighting, killing and defending themselves from workers for interests that are not their own. The bosses blood, the oligarchs blood, the politicians blood is not being spilled.

Apparently as 'westerners' we cannot be critical of anarchists who have joined the 'resistance'. No doubt they have a difficult choice to make in the face of Russian military aggression and believe sincerely that this is the only way they can defend themselves. We may be a wee bit further west than many of our English speaking comrades (though not as far as others), but we do have some experience of imperialism, sectarianism and the poison of nationalism. All the above count their 'victories' in the lives, incarceration, maiming, trauma and bereavement of working class people.

How do we fight militarism and war? Not with militarism and war! We fight it with international working class solidarity against militarism. A start has been made. No war but the class war!

A new workers' Ulster council strike?

Despite Unite the Union not being the most vocal about advertising it, workers across all ten Northern Ireland councils voted by over 90% to reject yet another below inflation pay offer. Triggering strike action from 21 to 27 March.

With inflation now running at 5.5% and widely predicted to double by the end of this year, our councils thought 1.75% represented a decent offer for workers. It is an offer no doubt mandated by all of the main political parties. The same ones who recently gratefully accepted yet another pay rise for their members at Stormont.

Moreover, it emerged just last year that Belfast City Councillors had voted themselves a 2.75% hike in their allowances. Now, they will of course claim that various 'independent', non-partisan bodies, groups or individuals take, and have taken these decisions and, as such, these matters are largely out of their hands.

It always sounds almost like a reverse robbery, they were held up and deprived of their wallet and purse by some bastard who proceeded to fill it with cash and then ran off, leaving them powerless and forced to admit that the 'optics' of it don't look good.

These parasites should be shown up for what they are. Meanwhile hundreds of workers repeatedly stand in the cold to demand a bit of fairness, dignity and proper treatment in the harshest economic climate capitalism has created in recent years. In the face of the onslaught we are facing we are forced to point out - our demands as workers are much too moderate!

BELFAST CLASS STRUGGLE ANARCHIST ASSEMBLY

On Saturday 19th March the first Belfast Class Struggle Anarchist Assembly took place at the Just Books Peoples Library and Archive. We hope this is the first of many.

Former Belfast Anarchist Group, Belfast Libertarian Group and Peoples Democracy (PD) activist Michael Hall talked to us about involvement in those groups, his later experiences of community activism and his Island Pamphlet/Community Think Tank project. From working class East Belfast Michael's family were atheist and had connections with the Communist Party and trade union movement. Michael began to feel that Marxism was basically another religion and with the revolutionary upsurge in 1968 from France to Japan, to the USA and the May events in Paris coupled with the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, he completed his journey to libertarian socialism.

Much of the work of the new Anarchist group set up in Belfast was understandably subsumed in the activity of Peoples Democracy. Michael told us stories of the anarchists being attacked and threatened by umbrella-wielding Paisleyite women and loyalists, with Michael himself also receiving a personal threat from the Provos. The anarchist banner was grabbed by loyalists as the PD march to Derry made its way along Irish Street. After a struggle it was snatched out of the hands of the anarchists and when Michael looked back moments later it was already in flames. Following the heady talk of working-class unity that got people out onto the streets Michael described a situation that degenerated into sectarian violence and the consolidation of two nationalist camps. PD seemed unwilling and unable to challenge the direction events were taking. It was a process that saw threats from all quarters, split the anarchist group, led to the dissolution of BAG and the short-lived formation of the Belfast Libertarian Group. A group which heroically tried to resist the resurgence of nationalism and sectarian violence. We can't do the scope or detail of Michael's story justice here. It proceeded through engaging with community activists and people on all sides of the conflict, through a brief and beautiful period of pure anarchic activity by members of the Rathcoole Self Help Group, ongoing engagement and commitment to what he describes as a process of promoting discussion and encouraging the voices of the powerless. All littered with startling and engaging anecdotes and stories from someone who experienced just how potential for class unity, and space for libertarian socialist ideals, can be torn asunder amid sectarianism, conflict and nationalism.

May Day Anarchist Event

Join us on the first 'live' May Day march in a while on Saturday 30th April in Belfast and then on Monday 2nd for our Anarchism and the labour movement event in Artcetera!

We will be discussing the Anarchist origins of May Day, and Anarchism and the labour movement today.

Meanwhile at Stormont

The left seem devastated that new pro-Union (Trade Union) legislation didn't get passed at our wee dysfunctional Assembly.

As if the P&Os of the world would take heed! With the best will in the world any such legislation is meaningless unless forced upon those in power by a strong, organised and combative working class. That takes more work than proposing an ill-fated bill.

Organise!

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Get Involved: Help Build An Anarchist Alternative.

Organise! is an anarchist political group in Ireland who take inspiration from the self directed struggles of working-class people, particularly those organised on anarcho-syndicalist lines. Our history goes back to the original formation of Organise! by the Ballymena and Antrim Anarchist Groups in 1985.

We are a small, but growing, group of ordinary working class people who are fed up with being fucked about by the profit system, fed up with seeing our communities and workplaces torn apart by racism, patriarchy, nationalism and sectarianism, and sick of a greedy few getting rich off everyone else's backs.

We are actively working to promote solidarity in opposition to capitalism, the state, patriarchy and all other forms of oppression and hierarchy. The way we organise reflects the free society we want to create: one based on voluntary association, democratic participation and self-management.

Our members are workers, claimants, students, migrants, unemployed and other working-class people committed to building a libertarian communist union movement actively opposed to all forms of oppression and exploitation.

We want to improve everyday conditions for ourselves and other working class people, but we also struggle for the revolutionary transformation that can create a free and equal society, one based on mutual aid and co-operation. Sound crazy? Maybe it does, but in an era in which it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism the continuation of the present system is even crazier…

The current system isn't working – ill-health, stress and overwork affect more and more people while others are flung on the dole; for increasing amounts of workers it is precarity, zero hours contracts and the stress of being unable to plan or budget our lives; we live in a world of plentiful resources yet millions starve; some people make vast fortunes just because they own companies, land, property or natural resources, but those of us who create the wealth, work the land and build the properties are left struggling to survive; politicians tell us there's no money – not for wages, benefits or local amenities, but there's always plenty for war; both locally and globally the gap between the richest and the poorest sections of society has never been so great; instead of a war on poverty they've got a war on 'benefit fraud', while the same system that creates war, poverty and environmental destruction stigmatises, imprisons and deports the resultant refugees.

We don't think these things are inevitable or coincidental, we think they are related to capitalism – an economic system defined by wage slavery and the accumulation of profit out of other people's work. So we support all workers against their bosses in demanding higher wages and better conditions. We try to intervene practically to support workers engaged in disputes and are also active in our own workplaces and communities. Not only against exploitation but against the multiple oppressions faced by members of the working class in all our diversity.

But it's not just a question of trying to struggle by in a world of exploitation and oppression; we look to a future where workers control production and society in their own interests. And unlike some people who claim to oppose capitalism, we don't want to be a new set of leaders and we refuse to be led by anyone else. We advocate direct democracy in the workplace and through the commune in our communities – working in federation to ensure that the needs of all are met and that no-one is ever again in a position to oppress or exploit another human being.

If you are interested in these ideas, we'd encourage you to explore our website and consider getting involved.

We currently have members in Belfast, Cork, Derry, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and Portadown and are building the organisation on the basis of active involvement and participation. We aren't interested in meaningless 'paper' membership so you can't join by filling in an online form and bunging us a few quid.

To talk to us about joining get the ball rolling, check out our website at https://organiseanarchistsireland.com and send an email to:

organiseasi@gmail.com